

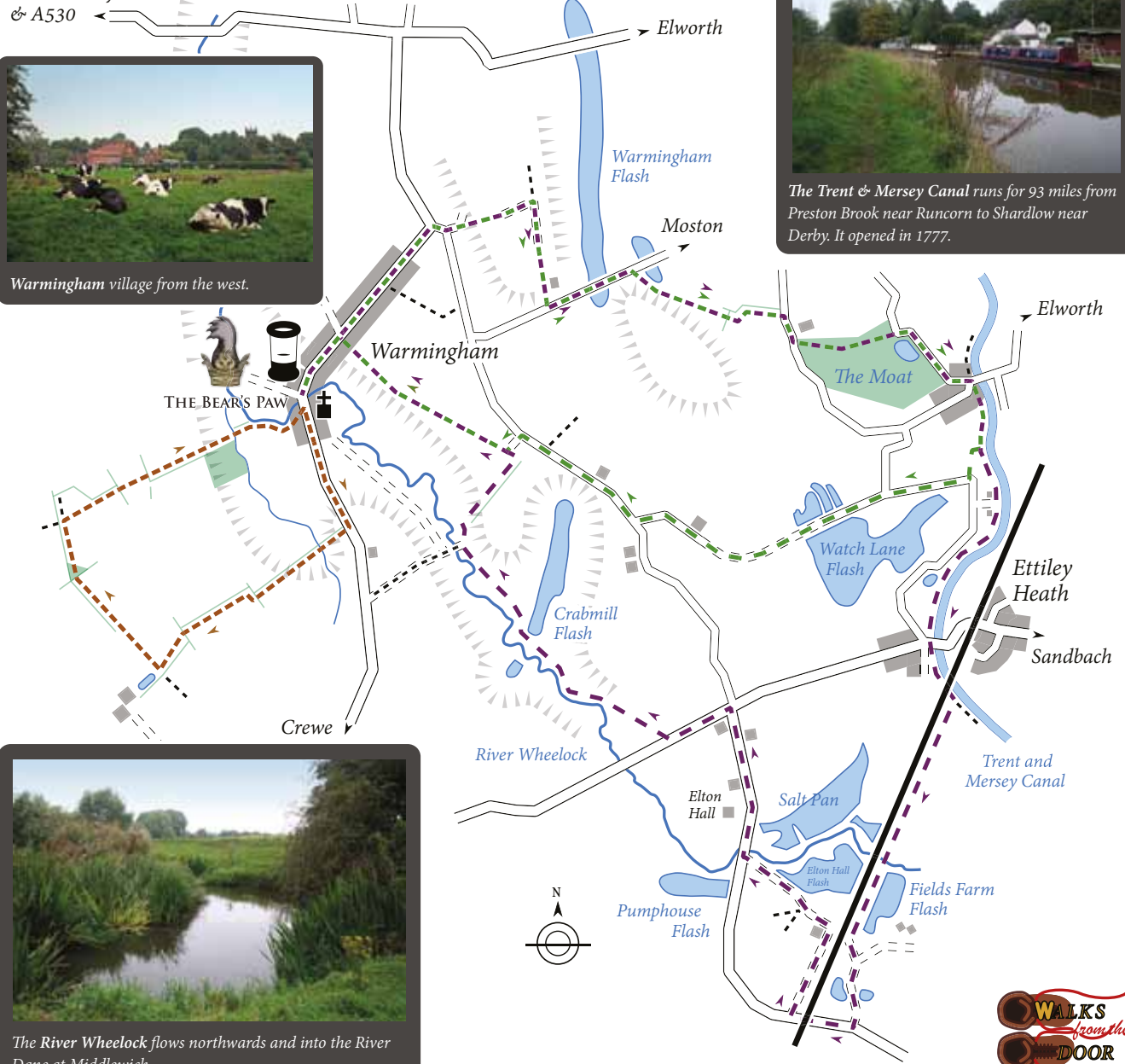
Wimboldsley
& A530



Warmingham village from the west.



The Trent & Mersey Canal runs for 93 miles from Preston Brook near Runcorn to Shardlow near Derby. It opened in 1777.



The River Wheelock flows northwards and into the River Dane at Middlewich.



THREE WALKS FROM



THE BEAR'S PAW

Warmingham
The Moat & Watch Lane Flash
Sandbach Flashes & River Wheelock



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WARMINGHAM CIRCULAR

A short farmland walk offering good views over the village, and a brief but pleasant stretch alongside the River Wheelock, frequented by Kingfishers.

2 miles. The opening section is along a busy road with narrow verges; later sections may be muddy after rain and you may encounter cattle in the fields. Allow 1–1½ hours.

1. From the entrance to the Bear's Paw, turn right across the bridge over the River Wheelock.
2. Turn left into the churchyard and walk clockwise round the church, noticing the Norman cross base on the far side.
3. Return to the road and turn left, passing the fine half-timbered wing of Church House on your right. Keep along the road past a farm on your left, keeping a keen eye out for the traffic once the verge narrows.
4. After half a mile, well before a house on the left, take a welcome footpath signposted on the right.
5. The path beyond drops to cross a footbridge over a stream, then follows the hedge beyond.
6. In the next field turn right then immediately left over a stile and walk along the edge of the field, in the same direction as before.
7. Keep to the left in the next field as you approach Ridding Farm. Well before you reach the farm buildings, look out for a stile on the left before a pond, and at this point turn 90° right and walk boldly across the field, aiming for an oak tree. The line of the path may not be obvious.
8. Pass to the right of the tree and follow the broken line of trees beyond, passing an overgrown pond partway along.
9. Cross into the next field via a belt of young trees.
10. Keep to the left-hand edge of this field until you see a stile on your left, before you reach the line of pylons. Turn right at the stile and strike out across the field. A hedge joins from the left, which you follow to the far side of the field.
11. Beyond the stile head across the next field, aiming just left of a gap on the far side where you will find another stile.
12. Keep along the right-hand side of the subsequent field, and then cross a stile and follow the path downhill with woodland on your right.
13. Cross a footbridge and skirt the next field to meet the River Wheelock, where you turn right.
14. Keep alongside the river as it curves left and passes through a garden. At the road, turn left to cross the bridge back to the Bear's Paw.

THE MOAT AND WATCH LANE FLASH

An interesting walk that visits several of the Sandbach Flashes, a series of intriguing lakes formed by subsidence after salt extraction.

4 miles. No major difficulties, though section 9 may be muddy or even flooded after heavy rain. Allow 2–2½ hours.

1. From the entrance of the Bear's Paw, turn left and walk up the main village street, passing the primary school and village hall on your left.
2. At a road junction just beyond the end of the village, turn right into Crabmill Lane.
3. Almost immediately turn left into an entrance and cross a stile between two field gates. The path beyond leads up the side of a field and



Warmingham Flash

then into a green lane.
4. When you meet a crossing path, follow the green lane to the right.
5. This leads through a couple of fields and past a house to a lane. Turn left past a sign warning of subsidence.

6. Follow the lane as it drops to cross Warmingham Flash and then, just before a second, smaller, flash, take a footpath on the right.
7. Beyond the end of the pond on your left, look out for a stile, also on your left. In the next field, head diagonally right across the field. As you reach the brow of the hill you pass a circular plastic water trough.
8. In the far corner of the field you will find a stile into the next field. Keep to the left-hand edge as it kinks left then right and then drop down some steps into another lane.
9. Turn right and walk down the lane past Yew Tree Farm, before taking a path on the left that leads into damp woodland (if the path proves impassable, keep along the road until you reach the canal at step 11).
10. Follow the path through woodland until it emerges onto another road by the lake known as The Moat. Turn right past the lake.
11. Beyond the lake, follow the road until you reach a junction by a canal bridge (bridge 160). Cross the road and take the towpath opposite.
12. After 250 yards look out on the right for a footpath that leaves the canal and crosses the field to join another lane at a bend. At the road, turn right.
13. When this lane bends right, take the no-through road straight ahead (Watch Lane), which leads to Watch Lane Flash.
14. Walk through the fishermen's car parks, with lakes to either side, then follow a hedged green lane beyond.
15. This lane becomes metalled once more at Watchmill Farm – follow it to a T-junction, where you turn right.
16. After a short distance, you will pass a brick cottage on your right and get a glimpse of Crabmill Flash away to your left. Keep on along the road.
17. Ignore a footpath on the right, then shortly afterwards turn left into a short green lane with hedges on either side.
18. At the end of the hedged section, turn right and follow the field edge.
19. Keep along the right-hand edge of a series of fields, ignoring any crossing tracks, until you emerge between houses on School Lane, Warmingham.
20. Turn left and return to the Bear's Paw.

SANDBACH FLASHES AND THE RIVER WHEELOCK

An extended walk visiting many of the Sandbach Flashes (lakes formed by subsidence following salt extraction) and including sections along the Trent and Mersey Canal and River Wheelock.

6 miles. May be muddy (or even impassable) at step 9, though an alternative is described. Some field paths may be obscured by crops at times. Allow 3–4 hours.

1. From the entrance of the Bear's Paw, turn left and walk up the main village street, passing the primary school and village hall on your left.
2. At a road junction just beyond the end of the village, turn right into Crabmill

Lane. 3. Almost immediately turn left into an entrance and cross a stile between two field gates. The path beyond leads up the side of a field and then into a green lane.
4. When you meet a crossing path, follow the green lane to the right.
5. This leads through a couple of fields and past a house to a lane. Turn left past a sign warning of subsidence.
6. Follow the lane as it drops to cross Warmingham Flash and then, just before a second, smaller, flash, take a footpath on the right.
7. Beyond the end of the pond on your left, look out for a stile, also on your left. In the next field, head diagonally right across the field. As you reach the brow of the hill you pass a circular plastic water trough.
8. In the far corner of the field you will find a stile into the next field. Keep to the left-hand edge as it kinks left then right and then drop down some steps into another lane.
9. Turn right and walk down the lane past Yew Tree Farm, before taking a path on the left that leads into swampy woodland (if the path proves impassable, keep along the road until you reach the canal at step

- 11). 10. Follow the path through woodland until it emerges onto another road by the lake known as The Moat. Turn right past the lake.
11. Beyond the lake, follow the road until you reach a junction by a canal bridge (bridge 160). Cross the road and take the towpath opposite.
12. Follow the canal for just over half a mile and pass under a road bridge (bridge 159). Shortly afterwards walk beneath a railway bridge then immediately leave the towpath for a footpath on the right.
13. Follow the path parallel to the railway for half a mile, crossing the River Wheelock partway along and then passing a lake (Field Farm Flash) on your left.
14. When the path ends, follow the lane beyond to a T-junction, where you turn right, passing between a couple of small flashes to reach a road. Turn right.
15. After passing under the railway, turn immediately right into the drive to Brook Farm. Beyond the farm follow the track round to the left, alongside Elton Hall Flash, until you return to the road.
16. Turn right, crossing the Wheelock again (a short permissive path from the old bridge gives access to a viewpoint overlooking the Salt Pan, one of the more productive flashes for birdwatchers).
17. Walk past the entrance to Elton Hall and keep on along the road to a crossroads. Turn left.
18. Follow this busy road for 300 yards, then take a footpath on the right shortly before the road crosses the river.
19. Aim between the two nearest telegraph poles to a stile into a further field. Turn half left and walk down to the River Wheelock.
20. Follow the river downstream for a pleasant half-mile, leaving it briefly at Crabmill Flash where the path cuts a corner across a meander.
21. At a farm bridge, turn half right, uphill, to a stile and gate in the corner of the field.
22. Turn right and follow the right-hand edge of the field beyond (which may be under crops); at the top of the field turn left, passing the end of a short green lane on your right.
23. Keep along the right-hand edge of a series of fields, ignoring any crossing tracks, until you emerge between houses on School Lane, Warmingham.
24. Turn left and return to the Bear's Paw.



The Moat